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The Boozman Bulletin: Memo on Fiscal Responsibility

We must end the borrow and spend mentality that is so pervasive in Washington today. We can start by doing the most basic job of governing, which is passing a budget. There is finally progress on this front in the Senate where, for the first time in nearly four years, the Senate Budget Committee [approved a budget](#) and the chamber debated and [approved the Majority's budget resolution](#).

Unfortunately, I couldn't support this budget plan because it falls short of what we need to get our fiscal house in order and get our economy back on track. It's clear that our nation is on a fiscally irresponsible path and it's time to roll up our sleeves and make some difficult decisions so our children can inherit a strong country. Instead this budget plan raises \$1.5 trillion in taxes and adds \$7.3 trillion to our national debt.

While I believe we can get started on the right path to fiscal health with a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, I also believe that we need to make cuts to the wasteful and duplicative programs that Washington funds. Spending cuts are the approach that we need to take instead of increasing taxes on hardworking Americans.

In an effort to cut Washington spending by a trillion dollars, President Obama proposed and agreed to across-the-board cuts in 2011, known as sequestration. To avoid these automatic cuts, members of the joint deficit reduction committee, commonly referred to as the supercommittee were tasked with cutting more than \$1 trillion in deficit spending. As you may remember, the committee failed to make the necessary cuts. Because Congress failed to make reach an agreement on budget cuts, [sequestration began on March 1, 2013](#).

In legislation Congress passed last week to fund the government for the remainder of the fiscal year, we gave [federal agencies flexibility](#) with how they cut their budgets in order to

minimize the impact of sequestration.

While I believe cutting spending is essential to putting our country on the path to fiscal responsibility, indiscriminately cutting everything is not the best policy. We don't need to take a meat cleaver to our entire budget. I am committed to holding the line on reducing government spending, but there is a more practical way to eliminate expenses that better utilizes taxpayer dollars.

I want to know what you think. [Take our survey](#) so we can understand what actions you think we should to get our country back on sound financial footing.

Quick Takes:

- **Answers for Illegal Immigrants Release:** In late February, it was reported that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had released a “few hundred” illegal immigrants from custody. The administration drastically misrepresented the number to the public because more than 2,000 criminal illegal immigrants had been released from custody. We deserve answers about their release. We recently joined a group of U.S. Senators in [support of an effort](#) to require the Department of Homeland Security to provide Congress with information about the illegal immigrants who are being released for what the administration says is budget considerations.
- **UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) -** The Obama Administration has expressed an interest in international small arms control initiatives that were resisted previously by both the Bush Administration and the Clinton Administration. I'm strongly opposed to the U.S. signing any UN Treaty that would regulate small arms. We recently cosponsored a concurrent resolution to prevent that from happening. [Read more about it here.](#)
- **Defund the President's Health Care Law:** I voted for an amendment that would [prohibit funding for the implementation](#) of President Obama's health care law. This law does little to contain the cost of health care which is the real root of the problem. The amendment wasn't approved but I will continue to fight against this overreach.
- **Protecting the Value of the Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medals:** After hearing from the nation's leading veterans organizations, Senators Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Dean Heller (R-Nev.), Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and I introduced a bill to ensure that combat medals like the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart [rank ahead of a new medal](#) honoring service away from the front lines. Read the [Military Times story](#) about this legislation.

- **Veteran Classification:** Under current law, the definition of a veteran applies only to servicemen and women who have served on active duty. A bill we introduced with Senator Mark Pryor would allow Guard and Reserve retirees with 20 years of service the [honor of being called a veteran](#).
- **Fighting for our Farmers:** The EPA is continuing its assault on America's farms with another excessive regulation that would be costly to our nation's agri-businesses. We cosponsored legislation to [prevent Arkansas farmers and ranchers from having to spend money](#) on equipment just to comply with another extreme regulation.
- **Keystone XL Clears Another Hurdle:** It's important to develop an energy policy that uses our natural resources and puts us on the path to energy independence. We can start moving our country in this direction with the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline, which recently [cleared another major hurdle](#).
- **Coordinated, Robust Energy Review:** We need to promote energy policies that put our nation on the path to energy independence. I have long supported an all-of-the above energy plan that uses all our nation's natural resources. We recently cosponsored the [Quadrennial Energy Review Act of 2013](#) that would authorize a government-wide coordination council to submit a comprehensive review of current domestic capabilities and future energy needs.
- **Reinvest Recreation Fees:** We joined efforts with Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) to introduce the [Corps of Engineers Recreation Improvement Act](#). This legislation would reinvest recreation fees to improve facilities where the funds were collected. This would allow millions of dollars to be reinvested in Arkansas.
- **Let us Help You:** Helping Arkansans is an important part of my job. In 2012 alone, my staff and I helped 2,775 Arkansas families with matters involving the federal government. I encourage you to [contact one of my offices](#) if you need to discuss a problem you're having with a federal agency so we can help to resolve your issue or cut through the red tape to get your question answered.

